

Amendments Act of 2007—I would have voted “aye”; rollcall vote No. 1015, on motion to suspend the rules and pass—H.J. Res. 58, Country Music Month—I would have voted “aye.”

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. LAMPSON. Madam Speaker, on rollcall Nos. 1013, 1014, and 1015, had I been present, I would have voted “yea” on all.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Madam Speaker, on Tuesday, October 30, 2007, I was unavoidably detained due to a prior obligation.

Had I been present and voting, I would have voted as follows: (1) Rollcall vote No. 1013: “nay” (Previous Question on the Rule providing for H.R. 3867); (2) rollcall vote No. 1014: “yea” (On agreeing to the Senate Amendment on H.R. 3678 under suspension of the rules, the Internet Tax Freedom Act); (3) rollcall vote No. 1015: “yea” (Passage of H.J. Res. 58 under suspension of the rules, Expressing support for designation of the month of October 2007 as “Country Music Month” and to honor country music for its long history of supporting America’s armed forces and its tremendous impact on national patriotism).

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois. Madam Speaker, unfortunately today, October 30, 2007, I was unable to cast my votes on H. Res. 773, H.R. 3678, and H.J. Res. 58 and wish the record to reflect my intentions had I been able to vote.

Had I been present for rollcall No. 1013 on Ordering the Previous Question on H. Res. 773, Providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3867) to update and expand the procurement programs of the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes, I would have voted “nay.”

Had I been present for rollcall No. 1014 on suspending the rules and agreeing to the Senate Amendment to H.R. 3678, the Internet Tax Freedom Act Amendments Act of 2007, I would have voted “yea.”

Had I been present for rollcall No. 1015 on suspending the rules and passing H.J. Res. 58, Country Music Month, I would have voted “yea.”

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and enter into the RECORD any extraneous materials on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. TAUSCHER). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from New York?

There was no objection.

#### SMALL BUSINESS CONTRACTING PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 773 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in

the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 3867.

□ 1203

#### IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 3867) to update and expand the procurement of the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes, with Mr. HOLDEN in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, in recent years, the Federal marketplace has seen phenomenal growth. However, while procurement opportunities are increasing, agencies are failing to meet their small business, women, service-disabled veterans, minority and low-income contracting goals. This has not only cost small businesses billions of dollars in lost opportunities but deprives the government of a valuable supplier.

Our Nation’s entrepreneurs play an important role in the procurement system, providing diversity, competition, and ensuring we get the best value for the taxpayers’ dollar. To help them get a start, there is an array of contributing programs offering technical assistance, purchasing flexibility and targeted benefits. Unfortunately, due to legislative neglect, under funding and mismanagement by several administrations, the programs have fallen far short of their full potential, leaving many small businesses outside of the Federal marketplace.

The Small Business Contracting Program Improvements Act, introduced by myself and Representative Mary Fallin, will change that by making important improvements to women, minority, HUBZone and service-disabled veteran contracting programs. H.R. 3867 will immediately implement the Women’s Procurement Program that has languished in the current administration’s endless delays. It also updates the economic criteria for the 8(a) program, reflecting current fiscal realities. The last time Congress addressed the 8(a) program was almost 20 years ago, when a gallon of gas was 90 cents and the average cost of a home was less than \$90,000. For too long we have forced minority businesses to operate under antiquated financial standards that in many cases were simply setting them up to fail.

Most importantly, this legislation will give our service-disabled veterans top priority when it comes to con-

tracting. For those men and women returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, many with life-altering injuries, this bill will provide the tools to start a new endeavor and begin a new life. These changes would go a long way to addressing many of the program’s shortcomings that have frustrated our Nation’s small business owners.

Mr. Chairman, H.R. 3867 also fights fraud in the Federal marketplace. Contracting opportunities are a privilege, not a right. The Small Business Contracting Improvement Act makes that clear. For the first time, we are imposing a business code of conduct on all participants, requiring the Federal Government to verify that individuals are who they claim and empowering small firms to police their own programs. This will restore integrity to these critical programs.

Through modernizing programs and increasing accountability, H.R. 3867 brings SBA’s contracting programs into the 21st century. It is for this reason that this legislation has attracted remarkably broad support, including the National Federation of Independent Business, the Associated General Contractors, the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, AMVETS, the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the National Black Chamber of Commerce, the U.S. Women’s Chamber of Commerce, the International Franchise Association, as well as the National Defense Industrial Association and the Aerospace Industries Association.

This is a measured approach that balances the need to give program flexibility within the realities of current agency buying strategies. It is good for small business, good for the agency, and, most importantly, good for taxpayers.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to H.R. 3867, the Small Business Contracting Program Improvements Act. I strongly support the provisions in the bill that help those Americans, veterans of our Armed Forces, who have provided the great sacrifices to defend our freedom and our way of life. However, there are other provisions that are sufficiently problematic that makes it impossible for me to support the overall bill.

In 1997, Congress established the Historically Underutilized Business Zone, or HUBZone program. The program is designed to assist areas of low income and high unemployment by providing incentives for government contractors to relocate in these areas and expand their operations. By making it easier for small businesses located in HUBZones to win Federal contracts, Congress expected more government contractors to relocate in these areas and provide an important component to their revitalization.